Mohawk Valley Community College

Recommendations, Actions, and Responses

Sustainability Design Team

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Establish a full-time Director of Sustainability to report to the Office of the President.**
   Action – coordination of sustainability efforts have remained as part of the Sustainability Council, with no specific individual having responsibility for sustainability.
2. **Create a permanent budget line item to enable comprehensive sustainability initiatives.**
   Action - A small budget line was created in the 2011-12 budget with resources for sustainability efforts.
3. Establish a standing College Committee on Sustainability.
   Action – The sustainability council was created in 2009 and meets regularly.
4. Include sustainability as a permanent initiative in the College Strategic Plan.
   Action – Sustainability has been a standing initiative in the Plan.
5. Develop a plan to sign and meet the "President's Climate Commitment."
   Action – this significant commitment remains under review and consideration.

The following recommendations, constitute the foundation of a sustainability Plan with eight major focus areas

- Education
- Grants/Awards/Affiliations
- Landscaping/Pest Control
- Purchasing
- Renovation/New Building Construction
- Transportation
- Utilities/Energy
- Waste Reduction /Recycling: College-Wide and Food Service

Recommendations in Focus Areas
Education
Curriculum
Immediate Recommendations:

- Include sustainability topics in Cultural series; give DGV credit.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Support infusion of sustainability topics into existing courses across the curriculum where appropriate.
- Create DGV unit or units.
- Include as topic in ED100.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Develop courses within existing certificate/degree programs where appropriate.
- Develop new certificate/degree programs in sustainability.
- Achieve transfer/articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities.

Student Life

Immediate Recommendations:

- Include campus energy/waste reduction and recycling initiatives as topic in Orientation.
- Include regular Green Tips in *Hawk Talk and* MVCC TV system.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Create opportunities for student involvement through participation in clubs and organizations.
- Create programs to develop honors, awards and incentives for students.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Create Work Study and other employment opportunities for students to support College sustainability initiatives.

Employee Awareness

Immediate Recommendations:

- Highlight MVCC's sustainability initiatives at Convocation.
- Include as topic in new employee orientation.
- Include regular Green Tips in *Communitas.*

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Provide faculty/staff training.
- Create programs to develop honors, awards and incentives for employees.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Promote sustainable practices in ongoing manner.

Community

Immediate Recommendations:

- Publicize the initiation of MVCC's commitment to sustainability:
- Establish permanent presence on the College website.
- Issue press release to local media.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Provide community education non-credit offerings through CCED for
- homeowners and businesses.
- Provide community awareness programs and activities.
- Offer Speakers Bureau presentations on sustainability, including presentations in
- K-12 settings.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Provide corporate training modules through CCED.
- Create a community Reduce Carbon Emissions challenge.
- Create a community advisory group.

Grants /Awards/Affiliations

Immediate Recommendations:

- Seek NYSERTA (NYS Energy Research and Development Authority) start-up
- funding assistance.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Establish relationships with colleges and organizations on the forefront of the sustainability movement.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Seek private and public grants and awards to fund sustainability efforts.

Landscaping/Pest Control

Immediate Recommendations:

- Keep vehicles off landscaping.
- Use natural pest control and fertilizer.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Encourage a culture of respect for the natural environment.
- Use environmentally safe de-icing alternatives to protect groundwater.
- Protect existing trees and plantings.
- Plant native species that are adapted to local environmental conditions.
- Plant evergreen windbreaks and shade trees in appropriate areas.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Reduce lawn areas and all non-essential cutting.

Purchasing

Immediate Recommendations:

- Encourage sharing of equipment to avoid unnecessary purchases.
- Formalize an online College swap system to enable exchange of unneeded office supplies, equipment, furniture, etc.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Use portable laptops in "smart classrooms" rather than purchasing/upgrading stationary computers for every classroom.
- Develop and adopt a green purchasing policy that balances environmental impact with acceptable use and performance standards. Whenever possible, purchase products that are:
    - manufactured with the highest percent recycled content durable as opposed to single use or disposable, where appropriate
    - non-toxic or minimally toxic; preferably biodegradable
    - energy-efficient, sustainably harvested, and produced in an
    - environmentally-sound manner
    - environmentally safe to use and maintain
    - shipped with minimal packaging, preferably made of recycled or
    - recyclable materials
- Develop Green purchase guidelines for requisition users.

Long-Term

- Use an electronic purchasing process.

Renovation/New Building Construction

Immediate Recommendations:

- Benchmark present energy costs and usage on a per-building basis.
- Continue documentation and cost-savings analysis of sustainability initiatives.
- Obtain ESCO (Energy Service Company) audit to identify potential areas of
- energy conservation.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Determine MVCC's carbon footprint.
- Adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance.
- Develop a prioritized plan for renovations.
- Use recyclable/sustainable buildings materials.
- Target renovations that result in energy-cost savings such as:
    - lowering ceilings
    - installing efficient energy controls and monitoring mechanisms
    - installing efficient glazing
    - balancing pressure in Payne Hall
    - installing heat pumps to equalize building temperatures

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Meet highest LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
- certification for all new construction.
- Integrate capital costs with operating costs to determine lifecycle costs from
- bid specifications to ribbon cutting.
- Explore alternate energy/conservation options such as:
    - solar energy
    - rooftop gardens
    - rainwater collection systems for non-potable uses

Transportation

Immediate Recommendations:

- Limit vehicle use when moving from building to building on campus.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Encourage bicycle use during warm weather months; install secure bike racks.
- Encourage carpooling with preferential parking.
- Encourage use of public transportation by advertising availability of reduced-ride bus passes.
- Offer preferential parking for hybrid vehicles.
- Purchase environmentally-friendly vehicles for college use.
- Encourage use of low-mileage College vehicles rather than higher-mileage personal vehicles for College-related travel.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Implement a shuttle bus system between the Utica and Rome Campuses that encourages use by accommodating faculty/staff /student needs.
- Explore ways to reduce trips to MVCC for both students and employees.
- Encourage and work with local bus transit operations to expand bus service to MVCC campuses.

Utilities/Energy

Immediate Recommendations:

- Conserve energy by turning off lights and electronics when not in use.
- Use power strips to protect against surges and to avoid continued power drain when equipment is turned off.
- Use only energy-efficient replacement bulbs.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Install light sensors.
- Create a prioritized list of utility savings and a system for implementation.
- Reduce plug load.
- Explore performance contracting for energy-saving opportunities.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Require all new building construction to meet the highest possible LEED
- (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification standards.
- Create a strategic energy plan that supports continuous energy management.
- Renovate existing buildings to meet sustainable energy standards.
- Explore and utilize innovative sources of energy.

Waste Reduction/Recycling

College-Wide

Immediate Recommendations:

- Expand and standardize a College-wide recycling program with three bins (containers/paper/garbage) in all classrooms and other convenient locations.
- Follow all requirements of Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority.
- Obtain a free waste audit performed by Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority.
- Think before you print to reduce waste.
- Use both sides of paper:
- Copy two-sided.
- Re-use blank side as scrap paper on non-confidential items.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Reduce/eliminate junk mail.
- Share local phone books.
- Minimize distribution of paper notifications where appropriate.
- Conserve and reduce water consumption.
- Establish campus swap and repair shops to refurbish and reuse.
- Install and maintain updated drinking fountains to reduce bottled water usage.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Continually monitor waste streams to determine recycling potential.
- Implement a composting program.

Food Service

Immediate Recommendations:

- Provide recycling containers at all catering events to encourage recycling.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Increase food service education initiatives with students.

- Implement tray-less service in Resident Dining Hall and Faculty/Staff dining area.
- Continue to purchase products that are grown or produced locally.
- Host "local only" days that showcase local vendors.
- Assess equipment needs and meet needs within sustainable guidelines.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- Purchase only Energy Star rated equipment.
- Implement a composting program.
- Once composting is implemented, switch from paper and plastic plates, utensils,cups and containers to compostable corn or potato-based products.
- Switch equipment to natural gas instead of electric where possible.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of these recommendations is the reduction of consumption, waste, pollution, and emissions with an accompanying creation of a healthier environment for all who utilize MVCC's facilities. Upon achieving these goals, MVCC will be in a position to inspire and model sustainable practices for the larger community. *It is important to note that over time, it is expected that these changes will also result in a substantial reduction in financial costs to the College.* The University at Buffalo can be used as an example: Since its inception three decades ago, its green initiative has realized a savings of over $100,000,000.

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